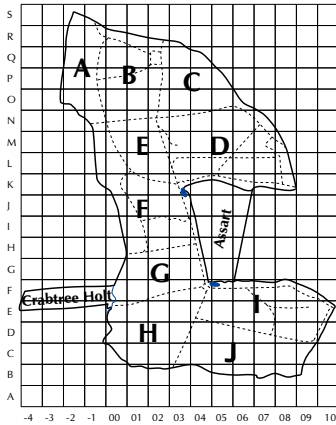


# TWITTER



Treswell Wood -

Information To Tell Every Recorder

**May 2014 Treswell Wood IPM Group**  
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

**Project leaders:**

**CBC** Pat Quinn-Catling

**Nest Records** Chris du Feu

**Ringing** John Clark

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**2014/2 Number 97**

## Common Birds Census 2012, 2013 and 2014

After a number of delays over the last two years, we are now back on schedule with processing of the data and maps of the CBC. Steve Wain has now digitised the 2012 maps and observers have been given copies of these. John Marchant at the BTO completed the 2013 species map drawing just a few days after the previous issue of Twitter was released. The full results are given on page 2. These 2013 maps are now with Steve for digitisation. This year's survey is progressing as usual - thanks to all the stalwart observers. In addition we are covering the assart fully for the first time. The species sighted there most often seems to be the brown hare - a pity it does not count towards the CBC. How the data will be incorporated into the existing set is yet to be decided but it is important to ensure we record the area from the start of its transformation from arable land to woodland (though it is certain that none of the present team will be here when it reaches its climax). Thanks are due to all the observers, to Pat Quinn-Catling for producing the composite species maps from the observers' visit maps, to John Marchant for drawing the territories according to the CBC protocols and to Steve Wain for his digital magic which makes all the maps so easily accessible.

What of the 2013 results? As ever, the results are broadly in line with what constant effort ringing tells us - a poor year for Robins, more evidence of the almost complete loss of Willow Warblers but Great Tits more common than in early years and also outnumbering Blue Tits. In addition to giving evidence of bird populations independent of those reached by other means, the CBC does reach some species that ringing cannot. Interestingly we see Lapwing featured for the second time, Skylark with more territories and Swallow appearing for the third year running after an absence since the late 1970s. All these three species are, obviously, associated with farmland and it may be that the assart (which has not had arable crops for two or three years) is attracting them and they are now using the woodland edges where there is more open coppice than formerly. It will be interesting to follow these as the assart develops. Rooks, surprisingly, appear for the first time ever. The wood has, in the past, been home to a winter roost of Rooks and Jackdaws although the roost has not been present in recent years. In spite of the past roosting, Rooks had not been recorded as using the wood in the breeding season before this CBC survey. Ringers have not caught any Willow Tits since April 2012 so it is good to see that the CBC did record one territory. Also very pleasing is the high number of Treecreeper territories.

## 2014 Nestbox Season

The main tit nesting season is all but over, although we are not yet in a position to tabulate the full results. Initial impressions are of a moderately successful season with very low rates of predation. Earlier nests did rather better than later ones as some later broods were lost in the cold and rain of the last week in May. We hope that birds that had already fledged would be able to fare better than those that were still unfledged in later broods. Time will tell later in the year when we begin to catch (or not) the fledged juveniles. Surprisingly in spite of the numbers of nesting Stock Doves, that species has not yet fared well. Initially there were several pairs using the large boxes, but over half of these nests were abandoned during incubation. In another box, the two chicks had died at just a few days old. Again, it seems to be weather to blame. Certainly, the nest abandonment has not been through predation. Only two pairs have, so far, managed to rear young. The adverse conditions also seems to have affected the Tawny Owl - one young died soon after hatching and the owl abandoned the other two eggs soon after. We wonder whether food supply is the problem. There does seem to be a shortage of small mammals in the wood - none have used the bird boxes for nesting and no nests in boxes have been predated by them. The same apparent mammal shortage does not apply to the farmland beyond the assart - the owl nest there was well provisioned with a dozen small mammal corpses in the larder. The May dormouse inspection found only one box with a wood mouse nest - again indicating a low population.

## Treswell Wood CBC - Numbers of territories - 2013 Results

Species	5-year averages							Mean	
	76...80	81...85	86...90	91...95	96...00	01...05	06...10	11/12	2013
Mallard	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.7	0
Sparrowhawk	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.5	1.0	p
Buzzard	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.7	1.0	1
Kestrel	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.7	1
Red-legged Partridge	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0
Grey Partridge	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0
Pheasant	8.2	4.7	8.0	6.4	6.0	8.6	8.0	6.0	11
Moorhen	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0
Woodcock	2.0	1.8	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.0	1.1	0.3	p
Lapwing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	p
Stock Dove	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	7.0	3.1	5.5	5
Woodpigeon	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	nc	nc	nc	nc	nc
Collared Dove	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0
Turtle Dove	7.6	1.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0
Cuckoo	5.0	2.4	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.3	0
Barn Owl	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0	0
Tawny Owl	1.4	2.6	1.8	1.2	1.4	3.0	1.4	1.5	1
Green Woodpecker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.6	2.2	2.0	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1.6	3.6	2.4	2.4	2.4	5.6	6.8	4.0	3
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0.0	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
Skylark	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5	2.0	3.0	4
Swallow	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	1
Pied Wagtail	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0
Wren	59.4	55.8	69.0	71.8	81.8	76.4	72.8	60.5	62
Duncock	27.2	23.8	22.2	13.4	12.6	8.4	10.6	5.5	5
Robin	58.4	60.4	46.6	48.0	54.0	81.4	73.2	42.5	27
Wheatear	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0
Blackbird	35.0	29.0	28.4	20.2	25.2	27.0	33.6	23.0	23
Song Thrush	29.6	23.6	16.8	7.2	5.6	6.8	10.2	4.0	7
Fieldfare	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0
Mistle Thrush	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	1.0	2.8	3.8	0.7	2
Lesser Whitethroat	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
Whitethroat	5.6	1.6	1.8	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.5	0
Garden Warbler	15.0	15.4	9.4	4.4	7.2	6.8	3.0	1.3	2
Blackcap	15.4	12.4	20.4	20.6	25.4	27.2	25.8	20.5	26
Chiffchaff	14.8	8.2	8.6	15.8	19.0	18.6	21.2	28.0	23
Willow Warbler	27.6	44.0	31.4	18.2	6.8	5.0	4.3	4.5	1
Goldcrest	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.3	p
Spotted Flycatcher	1.6	3.0	1.8	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.5	0
Long-tailed Tit	3.4	3.0	3.6	4.8	5.0	8.2	6.2	3.0	2
Marsh Tit	1.6	0.5	1.0	2.2	4.2	2.1	1.1	3.5	3
Willow Tit	3.0	1.8	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.5	0.6	0.5	1
Coal Tit	2.0	2.6	2.0	6.2	7.4	6.4	4.4	5.0	4
Blue Tit	32.8	60.2	67.2	59.2	70.0	50.6	44.2	42.5	42
Great Tit	13.4	26.8	36.8	31.8	35.2	46.8	34.8	47.0	47
Nuthatch	0.0	0.4	0.4	1.0	1.2	1.2	3.0	8.0	7
Treecreeper	2.0	1.8	4.0	3.4	3.6	3.1	2.4	3.0	6
Jay	3.2	3.6	2.4	1.4	1.0	1.9	1.7	2.0	1
Magpie	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0
Rook	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p
Carrion Crow	1.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.7	1.2	0.5	2
Starling	5.2	4.8	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0
House Sparrow	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
Tree Sparrow	21.0	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.3	0
Chaffinch	33.4	38.4	39.0	39.0	40.6	48.8	45.0	39.5	44
Greenfinch	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.8	0.7	0.5	0.0	0
Goldfinch	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.5	1.0	2
Linnet	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
Redpoll	3.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
Bullfinch	5.4	3.2	3.0	1.4	0.6	1.8	2.0	1.8	3
Yellowhammer	1.8	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0	0
Reed Bunting	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0
<b>Total territories</b>	<b>457.4</b>	<b>457.0</b>	<b>437.6</b>	<b>386.2</b>	<b>426.8</b>	<b>464.8</b>	<b>427.6</b>	<b>364.5</b>	<b>370</b>

Notes: p - present but too few observations to determine any territory. nc - not counted

We have, again, collected frass falling from trees above our sampling points. The samples will be sent to Ken Smith for him to separate the dross from the frass and weigh the latter. This is now our fourth year of the systematic operation - enough to begin temporal analyses.

There are many problems in nestbox design - perhaps the biggest is that birds just do not read the textbooks. We have noted before the alacrity with which Great Tits will go for any box designed for other species - Nuthatch, Little Owl, Tawny Owl, they are not fussy. This year we have experimented with a new design of box for Treecreepers. This was described by Dave Francis (a long term ringer and nestbox user). The design, which Dave has used successfully in Northamptonshire, provides a nesting chamber about 35mm deep and 250mm square, providing them with a space resembling their natural choice. We produced and installed seven of them. The entrance is a narrow slit and it is too narrow for Great Tits to use. Dave has now suggested the slit should be even narrower than on his first models - 15mm only. This is to exclude Blue Tits as well. We will be narrowing our entrances before the 2015 breeding season. Our results? Six unused and one used by Blue Tits. Dave did say it was not until his second year that his Treecreepers began to use the boxes so we have not abandoned hope.

The problems of over-provision of nesting holes which happened in previous dormouse monitoring operations have been well documented. The dormouse team came up with a modified dormouse box design which we were very happy would be totally unacceptable to birds except, possibly, a few Wrens. This was reported in the previous issue of Twitter. Success? Not exactly. One Great Tit (what else would it be?) was seen attempting to gain entry to one dormouse box 'with immense intent but to no avail'. Not so much success with the smaller tits - two boxes have been used by Coal Tits and more by Blue Tits. The most prolific users have been Wrens. It seems that some cock birds select and build nests in several closely spaced boxes. I suppose if the bird thinks one box is a suitable nest site, other nearby boxes are also likely to be selected for later broods. What have we all learned? It seems we have inadvertently come up with a good box design for Wrens, but back to the drawing board for the solving the original problem of over-provision of nest sites. You win some, you lose some.

The wet weather, as noted, has taken its toll. What was noticeable, though, is that boxes where there is no overhang of the sides by the lid are far more susceptible to soaking inside. Many standard designs of boxes do give plans which use wood cut from a single plank - and this is what gives the lid the same width as the box body and no overhang. It is certainly efficient to make such designs but the wet weather this year suggests that efficiency of production does not give efficacy in function.

We have put a Kestrel box overlooking the assart. A Kestrel is often seen hunting in the area and has even been seen at the tree where the box is sited. It has not yet nested in it. Looking on the bright side, at least Great Tits have not used it. We were delighted when our second Little Owl box was used this year but should not have been surprised to find the user was, yes, a Great Tit.

## Assart - a footnote

Assart is not a word in common usage. Indeed, I was questioned by one erudite Twitter reader (who is an ornithological professor, no less) about its meaning. It means an area of land where woodland has been cleared to provide farmland. So why is every bit of agricultural Britain not called an assart? The word was only in use for a short time. This means it can be helpful in dating the time at when a particular plot was cleared.

The on-line Oxford dictionary gave this:

*late Middle English (as a noun): from Old French essarter, from medieval Latin ex(s)artare, based on ex 'out' + sar(r)ire 'to weed'. The verb dates from the early 16th century.*

So now we know. On with the job of pulling out those nasty old weeds like oak, herb paris, yellow archangel or wood anemone and replacing them with the countryside-enhancing maize and oil seed rape.

## Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Stock Dove	1	EF57096	30/4/2014	F05
Great Spotted Woodpecker	4M	CT84206	25/5/2014	Q02

This was the first nestling to be ringed this year. Stock Doves seem to be nesting earlier (in addition to nesting in greater numbers) than in former years. This is the third year in which they have provided the earliest nestlings to be ringed (also 2003 and 2011). The earliest ever nestling ringing date for the species was April 20<sup>th</sup> in 2011.

Last time we trapped this bird it raised the age record for this species in the wood by 80 days. This time, 11 months later it has again raised the record - to 8 years and 310 days. (The national record is 10 years and 329 days.) It was ringed as a juvenile in 2005 so it is now in its 8<sup>th</sup> breeding season. Like most birds, its plumage is renewed each year so that its age is not apparent from the state of its plumage (a pity the same is not true for the people who ring the birds). Few small birds reach old age but die through starvation, predation or various other causes which can

strike a bird at any age. Birds can only reach this great age through a combination of fitness and chance - with chance being by far the greater factor.

**Dunnock**                      **5M**        **TR47579**        **18/5/2014**        **R00**

Treswell Wood used to be referred to by some ringers as Dunnock City. Happy days - but alas no more. Sometimes, though, we have reminders and this bird was one such. It was one of 7 we caught on the day out of a total catch of 42 birds - one bird in every six a Dunnock.

**Song Thrush**                      **3J**        **RW58270**        **18/5/2014**        **Q01**

CBC observers have reported an abundance of Song Thrushes this season - to the point that some wondered if they were correctly identifying this bird which has recently been present in only small numbers. It does look like a good year for them - and we hope it continues. We have so far caught eight - just above the average of seven over the previous five years during March, April and May. This individual was a juvenile indicating successful breeding in or near the wood.

**Blackcap**                      **4M**        **L731987**        **1/6/2014**        **L01**

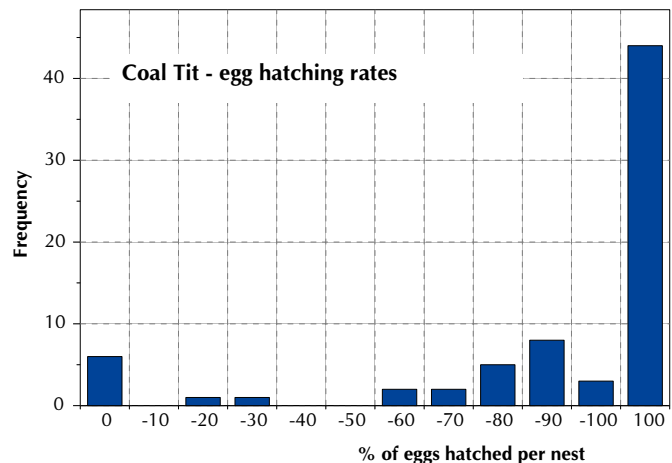
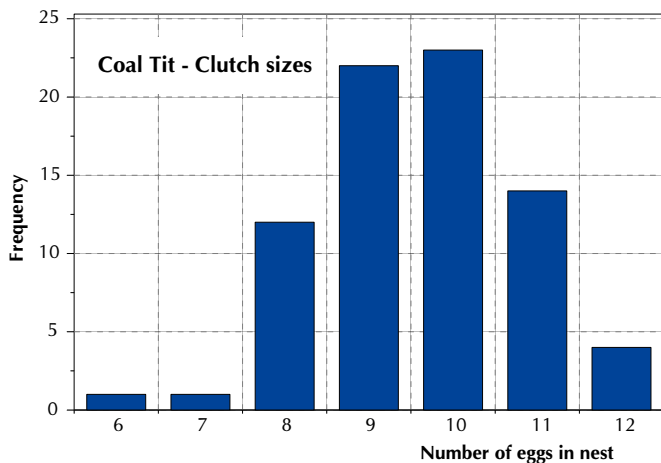
Blackcaps are often very site-faithful. This one is a typical example. We caught it in the adjacent net of the same standard site one year less a day before. So, although it has possibly spent the winter in Portugal or Morocco, it returns to the same spot for the next breeding season. And, if the ringers had returned on the Monday instead of the Sunday it would have been on the same date in addition to being in the same place.

**Long-tailed Tit**                      **4F**        **CXN010**        **12/5/2014**        **D09**

Small birds, on average, have short lives but some lucky individuals manage to last rather longer. This one has now carried its ring for just over 5 years and, judging from its encounter locations, is a resident breeder somewhere in the southern third of the wood.

**Coal Tit**                      **4F**        **L731693**        **2/5/2014**        **L00**                      **On nest**

A juvenile of 2012, this individual nested in the same nestbox in 2013 as this year. The 2013 nest resulted in 11 of which we have retrapped 3. The 2014 nest was most unusual. It had, as typical, 10 eggs but, of these only one hatched. This is unprecedented in our boxes where Coal Tits almost invariably have very high or complete hatching success. What went wrong for this experienced and previously successful bird?



**Blue Tit**                      **5**        **L327836**        **18/2/2014**        **Finningley Airfield near Doncaster**

This is one of our 2013 nestling ringed cohort, one of a brood of 12. Two have been retrapped in the wood and this one had not been since since fledging. It is our second nestling-ringed bird to be controlled by Dave Hazard's long-standing operation at Finningley - the previous one being a Great Tit captured there in 1989.

**Blue Tit**                      **6F**        **X649460**        **14/5/2014**        **M07**                      **On nest**

At four years since being ringed, this bird has reached a well above average age. Its 11 encounter history includes captures on a nest in each year from 2010 except 2012. All its known nesting attempts have been in the north-east of the wood boxes A46 -10, A69 - 11, A82 13, DD15 - 14. All this year's nestlings died in the wet weather. Of her previous known attempts, the first was most successful with nine young being reared of which three have been subsequently recaptured. Of these three, one was found nesting in 2012 but she deserted her eggs. The 2011 nest produced six fledged birds of which we have seen none again and the 2013 nest was unsuccessful. Overall, apparently, not a very good track record of passing on genes in spite of her relatively long history.

**Blue Tit                      6M            X649902            12/5/2014            E10**

A bird with a rather unexpected encounter history. It was ringed as a juvenile in November 2010 and retrapped twice, the last time being in September 2011. Thereafter no captures until February this year when it appeared at Hillcrest Farm in Treswell village. Now, over three years since its last appearance in the wood, it is back in the same south-western corner where all its previous woodland captures took place.

**Nuthatch                      4M            TR47593            18/5/2014            Q02**

This has not been a good year for Nuthatches in the wood - in recent years they had been heard almost every time we visited the wood. This year we have only recorded them on four of our weekly visits and this is only the third we have caught this year. It is hard to see why numbers have fallen - the last winter was mild and, according to CBC records, last year's population was as strong as ever.

**Treecreeper                      6            CXN122            30/3/2014            K00**

Not our oldest known Treecreeper by a long way, but at 4 years and 4 months since ringing still quite a respectable age. In spite of its long history, now with 10 encounters, it seems to have a much smaller range than many birds of the species. We have only ever caught it in a narrow band across the centre of the wood - an area of only about 120 m x 120 m.

**Greenfinch                      6F            TR47571            23/3/2014            Q05**

Nowadays we rarely catch Greenfinches - they were more frequently caught in the days of pheasant feeding pens. It is even rarer for us to retrap a Greenfinch. This is our only Greenfinch so far this year, having been ringed originally in August 2013.

**Bullfinch                      4M            D309171            1/6/2014            L01**

Ageing Bullfinches is very easy - the edge of the carpal covert is brown on juvenile feathers and grey on adult feathers. Because the carpal covert is not moulted until the bird reaches its second autumn, juvenile plumage can be recognised until birds are about 15 months old. That is what the book says, although it notes that perhaps one in a thousand may moult this vital carpal covert. This bird, ringed still in its unmistakable juvenile plumage in September 2013 today had a grey-edged carpal covert. This is not the first such Bullfinch we have recorded like his and it seems the one in a thousand figure is somewhat lower than we are now seeing in the wood. We wonder if, like we have seen with Great Tits, Bullfinches are now moulting more feathers as part of post-juvenile moult than they did in former times. It is worth examining these coverts carefully - it is just possible that the moulted-as-juvenile coverts have a less clear ash-grey edge than those on adults.

**10-Week Summary: 2014 Interval 2, Captures in Standard Sites**

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	.	12	.	3	13	.	28
Dunnock	3	3	.	4	2	.	12
Robin	1	3	.	3	4	.	11
Blackbird	.	1	.	6	1	.	8
Song Thrush	.	2	.	1	.	.	3
Blackcap	6	9	.	1	.	.	16
Chiffchaff	12	1	.	2	.	.	15
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	.	2	.	.	2
Coal Tit	.	.	.	1	2	.	3
Blue Tit	.	1	.	4	2	.	7
Great Tit	.	2	.	1	5	.	8
Treecreeper	.	1	.	3	7	.	11
Chaffinch	1	2	.	1	.	.	4
Bullfinch	.	3	.	.	1	.	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>132</b>

**Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week periods - Summary table**

**Summary Data** since standard site netting began in 1978:

<b>Maximum</b>	128	145	288	253	177	864
<b>Minimum</b>	57	33	89	66	59	364
<b>Mean</b>	90	108	158	130	123	609